

Traditional Food Based Menu Planning

If you select Traditional Food-Based Menu Planning, you will use the lunch meal pattern shown on the following two pages. Here are some things to keep in mind:

1. The FIVE required food items for a daily lunch are:
 - One serving of Meat/Meat Alternate
 - One serving of Grains/Breads
 - Two servings of Vegetables (must be two different vegetables),
or two servings of Fruits (must be two different fruits),
or one of each
 - One serving of Milk
2. For some components, servings are specified by day. For others, servings are specified on a daily and weekly basis.
3. Minimum requirements are shown.

The meal pattern shows the *minimum* number of servings and portion sizes for each of the required food components for lunches planned with the Traditional approach. You may increase portion sizes and add additional foods when needed.

4. Information is given for several different age/grade groups.

If your schools serve Grades K-12, it is best to use *at least* the two established age/grade groups. These are for Grades K-3 and Grades 4-12. To go even farther in targeting meals to the ages of the children you serve, you may also use the group shown in the last column. This group — for Grades 7-12 — is *recommended* although not required.

Because some schools serve very young children, the meal pattern also shows minimum quantities for children 1- to 2-years-old and preschoolers (children older than 2 years). USDA has not set nutrient standards for the 1- to 2-year-old group.



MENU PLANNING IN THE NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

The National School Lunch Act mandates that school meals "safeguard the health and well-being of the Nation's children". Participating schools must serve lunches that are consistent with the applicable recommendations of the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans including: eat a variety of foods; choose a diet with plenty of grain products, vegetables and fruits; choose a diet moderate in sugars and salt; and choose a diet with 30% or less of calories from fat and less than 10% of calories from saturated fat. In addition, lunches must provide, on average over each school week, at least 1/3 of the daily Recommended Dietary Allowances for protein, iron, calcium, and vitamins A and C. To provide local food service professionals with flexibility, there are four menu planning approaches to plan healthful and appealing meals. Schools choose one of the approaches below. The choice of what specific foods are served and how they are prepared and presented are made by local schools.

The Traditional Food-Based Menu Planning Approach

Under the Traditional Food-Based Menu Planning Approach, schools must comply with specific component and quantity requirements by offering five food items from four food components. These components are: meat/meat alternate, vegetables and/or fruits, grains/breads, and milk. Minimum portion sizes are established by ages and grade groups.

(See chart on following page)

TRADITIONAL FOOD-BASED MENU PLANNING APPROACH—MEAL PATTERN FOR LUNCHES					
FOOD COMPONENTS AND FOOD ITEMS	MINIMUM QUANTITIES				RECOMMENDED QUANTITIES
	GROUP I AGES 1-2 PRESCHOOL	GROUP II AGES 3-4 PRESCHOOL	GROUP III, AGES 5-8 GRADES K-3	GROUP IV AGES 9 AND OLDER GRADES 4-12	GROUP V AGES 12 AND OLDER GRADES 7-12
Milk (as a beverage)	6 fluid ounces	6 fluid ounces	8 fluid ounces	8 fluid ounces	8 fluid ounces
Meat or Meat Alternate (quantity of the edible portion as served):					
Lean meat, poultry, or fish	1 ounce	1½ ounces	1½ ounces	2 ounces	3 ounces
Alternate Protein Products ¹	1 ounce	1½ ounces	1½ ounces	2 ounces	3 ounces
Cheese	1 ounce	1½ ounces	1½ ounces	2 ounces	3 ounces
Large egg	½	¾	¾	1	1½
Cooked dry beans or peas	¼ cup	3/8 cup	3/8 cup	½ cup	¾ cup
Peanut butter or other nut or seed butters	2 tablespoons	3 tablespoons	3 tablespoons	4 tablespoons	6 tablespoons
Yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened	4 ounces or ½ cup	6 ounces or ¾ cup	6 ounces or ¾ cup	8 ounces or 1 cup	12 ounces or 1½ cups
The following may be used to meet no more than 50% of the requirement and must be used in combination with any of the above: Peanuts, soynuts, tree nuts, or seeds, as listed in program guidance, or an equivalent quantity of any combination of the above meat/meat alternate (1 ounce of nuts/seeds=1 ounce of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish)	½ ounce =50%	¾ ounce =50%	¾ ounce =50%	1 ounce =50%	1½ ounces =50%
Vegetable or Fruit: 2 or more servings of vegetables, fruits or both	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup
Grains/Breads: (servings per week): Must be enriched or whole grain. A serving is a slice of bread or an equivalent serving of biscuits, rolls, etc., or ½ cup of cooked rice, macaroni, noodles, other pasta products or cereal grains	5 servings per week ² -- minimum of ½ serving per day	8 servings per week ² -- minimum of 1 serving per day	8 servings per week ² -- minimum of 1 serving per day	8 servings per week ² -- minimum of 1 serving per day	10 servings per week ² -- minimum of 1 serving per day

¹ Must meet the requirements in appendix A of 7 CFR 210.

² For the purposes of this table, a week equals five days.

The Traditional Food-Based Menu Planning Approach is designed to meet nutritional standards set forth in program regulations.

How does it count in the NSLP/SBP?

Milk = M

Meat/Meat Alternate = MA

Fruit/Vegetable = FV

Bread/Grain = B

Not Creditable = N

NOTE: Some foods are creditable in more than one category - list all that apply



FOOD	CATEGORY
ground beef	MA
french fries	
eggs	
tortilla	
yogurt	
applesauce	
dill pickles	
popcorn	
orange juice	
ice cream	
cooked dried peas	
pretzels	
canned beef ravioli	
chicken	
baked potato	
dip	
Hi-C	
1% vanilla milk	
wheat bread	
cranberry juice	
grits	
plums	

MENU DAY 1

FOOD	CATEGORY
carrots	FV
refried beans	
pudding	
strawberry jello	
cheese	
rice	
strawberry jam	
bacon	
lettuce	
2% chocolate milk	
kidney beans	
pepperoni pizza	
pancakes	
peanut butter (4 oz)	
sweet potato	
tortilla chips	
boxed macaroni and cheese	
1% vanilla milk	
wheat bread	
cranberry juice	
grits	
plums	

MENU DAY 2

Activity Sheet 1

**Offer
Serve**

**Sample Lunch Menus—
Traditional FBMP (Grades K-3)**

FOOD ITEMS	FOOD COMPONENTS
Lasagna OR Taco Pocket Green Salad with Dressing Fresh Banana Half Choice of Milk	
Hamburger on Bun with Fixin's (Catsup, Mustard, Relish) OR Chicken Nuggets with Roll Potato Rounds Fruit Cocktail Oatmeal Cookie Choice of Milk	
Ham Sandwich with Mayo, Mustard OR Bean & Cheese Burrito with Salsa Green Beans Peach Slices Low-fat Vanilla Pudding Choice of Milk	
Spaghetti with Meat Sauce and Garlic Bread OR Peanut Butter & Jelly Sandwich Tossed Salad with Dressing Fresh Apple Choice of Milk	
BBQ Chicken Drumsticks OR Cajun Fish Filet with Lemon Seasoned Rice Carrot & Celery Sticks with Dip Kiwifruit Bread Pudding Choice of Milk	

Sample Lunch Menus— Traditional FBMP (Grades 4-12)

MENU ITEMS OFFERED	FOOD COMPONENTS	REIMBURSABLE MEALS	NOT REIMBURSABLE
BBQ Pork on Whole-Wheat Bun with Coleslaw OR Chicken/Vegetable Stir-Fry with Chinese Noodles and Steamed Rice Pineapple Tidbits Gingerbread with Whipped Topping Choice of Milk	2 oz M/MA + 2 svg G/B + ½ cup V/F ¼ cup V/F 8 oz MILK		
Vegetable Lasagna with Garlic Bread OR Sub Sandwich with Oven-Fried Potato Wedges Tossed Salad with Dressing Oatmeal-Raisin Cookie Choice of Milk	2 oz M/MA + 2 svg G/B + ¾ cup V/F ½ cup V/F 8 oz MILK		
Breaded Chicken Nuggets with Honey-Mustard Dip OR Corn Dog with Mustard Oven Fries with Catsup Carrot & Celery Sticks with Dip Whole-Grain Roll Choice of Milk	2 oz M/MA + ½ svg G/B ½ cup V/F ¾ cup V/F 1 svg G/B 8 oz MILK		
Chili Cheese Nachos with Cornbread OR Breaded Fish Fillet on Bun with Tartar Sauce Tossed Salad with Dressing Steamed Green Peas Apple Crisp Choice of Milk	2 oz M/MA + 2½ svg G/B ½ cup V/F ¼ cup V/F ¼ cup V/F 8 oz MILK		
Spaghetti with Meat Sauce OR Honey-Lemon Chicken with Steamed Rice Broccoli Spears Fresh Peach Garlic Bread Choice of Milk	2 oz M/MA + 1 svg G/B ¾ cup V/F ½ cup V/F 1 svg G/B 8 oz MILK		

Enhanced Food Based Menu Planning

If you select Enhanced Food-Based Menu Planning, you will use the lunch meal pattern shown on the following two pages. Here are some things to keep in mind:

1. The FIVE required food items for a daily lunch are:
 - One serving of Meat/Meat Alternate
 - One serving of Grains/Breads
 - Two servings of Vegetables (must be two different vegetables), OR two servings of Fruits (must be two different fruits), OR one serving of each
 - One serving of Milk
2. For some components, servings are specified by day. For others, servings are specified on a daily *and* weekly basis.
3. Minimum requirements are shown.

The meal pattern shows the *minimum* number of servings and portion sizes for each of the required food components for lunches planned with the Enhanced approach.

4. Information is given for several different age/grade groups. The two established grade groups for the Enhanced lunch pattern are Grades K-6 and 7-12.

If your schools serve Grades K-12, you must use at least the *two* established age/grade groups shown in columns 3 and 4 — these are for Grades K-6 and Grades 7-12. To go even farther in targeting meals to the ages of the children you serve, you may also use the optional third group shown in column 5 — for Grades K-3.

Because some schools serve very young children, the meal pattern also shows minimum quantities for children 1- to 2-years-old and preschoolers (children older than 2 years). USDA has not set nutrient standards for the 1- to 2-year-old group.

5. For the purposes of this chart, a week equals 5 days.

As you plan meals, you will need to incorporate weekly minimum servings of certain food items in addition to minimum daily servings. The meal pattern is based on a week of 5 consecutive days. If you are planning menus for a school week that is longer or shorter than 5 days, you will need to adjust accordingly. (See note in Grains/Breads section of the meal pattern.)

For programs that serve meals for more than 5 days per week or less than 5 days per week, the additional or reduced quantities should be prorated over the actual number of serving days.

The Enhanced Food-Based Menu Planning Approach

The Enhanced Food-Based Menu Planning Approach is a variation of the Traditional Menu Planning Approach. It is designed to increase calories from low-fat food sources in order to meet the Dietary Guidelines. The five food components are retained, but the component quantities for the weekly servings of vegetables and fruits and grains/breads are increased.

ENHANCED FOOD-BASED MENU PLANNING APPROACH-MEAL PATTERN FOR LUNCHESES					
MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS					OPTION FOR
FOOD COMPONENTS AND FOOD ITEMS	AGES 1-2	PRESCHOOL	GRADES K-6	GRADES 7-12	GRADES K-3
Milk (as a beverage)	6 fluid ounces	6 fluid ounces	8 fluid ounces	8 fluid ounces	8 fluid ounces
Meat or Meat Alternate (quantity of the edible portion as served):					
Lean meat, poultry, or fish	1 ounce	1½ ounces	2 ounces	2 ounces	1½ ounces
Alternate protein products ¹	1 ounce	1½ ounces	2 ounces	2 ounces	1½ ounces
Cheese	1 ounce	1½ ounces	2 ounces	2 ounces	1½ ounces
Large egg	½	¾	1	1	¾
Cooked dry beans or peas	¼ cup	3/8 cup	½ cup	½ cup	3/8 cup
Peanut butter or other nut or seed butters	2 tablespoons	3 tablespoons	4 tablespoons	4 tablespoons	3 tablespoons
Yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened	4 ounces or ½ cup	6 ounces or ¾ cup	8 ounces or 1 cup	8 ounces or 1 cup	6 ounces or ¾ cup
The following may be used to meet no more than 50% of the requirement and must be used in combination with any of the above: Peanuts, soynuts, tree nuts, or seeds, as listed in program guidance, or an equivalent quantity of any combination of the above meat/meat alternate (1 ounce of nuts/seeds equals 1 ounce of cooked lean meat, poultry or fish).	½ ounce =50%	¾ ounce =50%	1 ounce =50%	1 ounce =50%	¾ ounce =50%
Vegetable or Fruit: 2 or more servings of vegetables, fruits or both	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup plus an extra ½ cup over a week ²	1 cup	¾ cup
Grains/Breads(servings per week): Must be enriched or whole grain. A serving is a slice of bread or an equivalent serving of biscuits, rolls, etc., or ½ cup of cooked rice, macaroni, noodles, other pasta products or cereal grains	5 servings per week ² – minimum of ½ serving per day	8 servings per week ² – minimum of 1 serving per day	12 servings per week ² – minimum of 1 serving per day ³	15 servings per week ² – minimum of 1 serving per day ³	10 servings per week ² – minimum of 1 serving per day ³

¹ Must meet the requirements in appendix A of 7 CFR 210.

² For the purposes of this table, a week equals five days.

³ Up to one grains/breads serving per day may be a dessert.

The Enhanced Food Based Menu Planning Approach is designed to meet the nutritional standards set forth in program regulations.

The Nutrient Standard Menu Planning Approach

Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (sometimes called “NuMenus”) is a computer based menu planning system that uses approved computer software to analyze the specific nutrient content of menu items automatically while menus are being planned. It is designed to assist menu planners in choosing food items that create nutritious meals and meet the nutrient standards.

The Assisted Nutrient Standard Menu Planning Approach

Assisted Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (sometimes called “Assisted NuMenus”) is a variation of Nutrient Standard Menu Planning. It is for schools that lack the technical resources to conduct nutrient analysis themselves. Instead, schools have an outside source, such as another school district, State agency or a consultant, plan and analyze a menu based on local needs and preferences. The outside source also provides schools with recipes and product specifications to support the menus. The menus and analyses are periodically updated to reflect any changes in the menu or student selection patterns.

Here are the required minimums for nutrients and calories for these nutrient standard menu planning approaches:

MINIMUM NUTRIENT AND CALORIE LEVELS FOR SCHOOL LUNCHES NUTRIENT STANDARD MENU PLANNING APPROACHES (SCHOOL WEEK AVERAGES)				
	MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS			OPTIONAL
NUTRIENTS AND ENERGY ALLOWANCES	Preschool	Grades K-6	Grades 7-12	Grades K-3
Energy allowances (calories)	517	664	825	633
Total fat (as a percentage of actual total food energy)	1	1, 2	2	1, 2
Saturated fat (as a percentage of actual total food energy)	1	1, 3	3	1, 3
RDA for protein (g)	7	10	16	9
RDA for calcium (mg)	267	286	400	267
RDA for iron (mg)	3.3	3.5	4.5	3.3
RDA for Vitamin A (RE)	150	224	300	200
RDA for Vitamin C (mg)	14	15	18	15

¹ The Dietary Guidelines recommend that after 2 years of age “...children should gradually adopt a diet that, by about 5 years of age, contains no more than 30 percent of calories from fat.”

² Not to exceed 30 percent over a school week

³ Less than 10 percent over a school week

Alternate Menu Planning Approach

This menu planning approach allows states and school districts to develop their own innovative approaches to menu planning, subject to the guidelines established in our regulations. These guidelines protect the nutritional and fiscal integrity of the program.

September 1, 2000

NuMenu Based Menu Planning

For LUNCHES Planned with NSMP and Assisted NSMP...

*If You Are Using Grade Groups,
The Nutrient Standards* Are:*

Age/Grade Group:	Preschool	Grades K-6	Grades 7-12	Grades K-3 Optional
Energy Allowances (Calories = cal.)	517 cal.	664 cal.	825 cal.	633 cal.
Protein (grams = g)	7 g	10 g	16 g	9 g
Calcium (milligrams = mg)	267 mg	286 mg	400 mg	267 mg
Iron (milligrams = mg)	3.3 mg	3.5 mg	4.5 mg	3.3 mg
Vitamin A (Retinol Equivalents = RE)	150 RE	224 RE	300 RE	200 RE
Vitamin C (milligrams = mg)	14 mg	15 mg	18 mg	15 mg
Total fat	No more than 30 percent of total calories should come from fat.			
Saturated fat	Less than 10 percent of total calories should come from saturated fat.			

Remember these important points: (1) This chart shows *minimum school week averages* for nutrients except for fat and saturated fat. (2) Fat should not exceed 30 percent of calories over a school week; and saturated fat should be less than 10 percent of calories over a school week. In addition, be aware that for both total fat and saturated fat, the grams of fat will vary depending on the calorie level.

* **NOTE:** These standards may change over time to reflect new nutrition knowledge or updated Dietary Guidelines. As they are revised, USDA will notify your State agency.

NuMenu Based Menu Planning

3. Criteria for a Reimbursable Meal

- To qualify for reimbursement, what must a lunch include? What must a breakfast include?

Under NSMP and Assisted NSMP, a reimbursable meal must contain a minimum of *three menu items*. This is true for lunch and breakfast; however, as we'll see below, the three menu items are not the same for both meals.

In addition, a reimbursable meal must *meet the nutrient standard* for the appropriate age or grade group when the nutrients in those foods are averaged over a school week. This can be accomplished by following the instructions in the USDA-approved software.

Let's look at how these criteria are summarized in the chart in Appendix 2. The chart states that a reimbursable meal:

- *Contains at least three menu items.*
- *Contains the planned number of menu items in the planned portion sizes to meet the week's nutrient standards.*
- *Meets the nutrient standards for the appropriate grade or age groups when averaged over 1 school week's menu.*

Below and on the next few pages, we'll see what each of these statements means in terms of day-to-day menu planning. Then, later in this chapter, we'll spend more time looking at menu items under "Meal Structure."

The first statement in Appendix 2 under "Criteria for a Reimbursable Meal" reads: *Contains at least three menu items*. Looking at this more closely, we'll want to know: What is a menu item? What are the three menu items a lunch must include? What are the three menu items a breakfast must include?

- What is a menu item?

A menu item may be any single food or combination of foods *except*: (1) a condiment or (2) a food of minimal nutritional value not included in a menu item.

Condiments include such items as relishes, catsup, mustard, jelly, gravies, and table spreads.

Foods of minimal nutritional value include such things as chewing gum, soda water, water ices, and certain candies. See Appendix 7 for definition under USDA regulations.

There are three *categories* of menu items:

- Entrées
- Milk
- Side Dishes

